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ABSTRACT

The present method of governance of California's public higher education, including the Coordinating Council for Higher Education, has worked well for coordination of the three segments of public higher education--the University of California, the California State University and Colleges, and the 96 California Community Colleges. A combination of local boards, statewide boards, and a coordinating board provides an effective system of governance. The processes and mechanisms for college governance should be established at the campus level, with appropriate review at the system level, and corrective measures, where necessary, at the legislative level. Local boards and chief executive officers of each campus should be given responsibility--and strict accountability--for governance of their campuses. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the statewide board to insure that due process is observed on each campus, and that faculty, students and other members of the campus community are consulted and have some appropriate advisement role in the decision-making process. (DB)

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GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION OF CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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California Community Colleges**

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Certainly no method of coordination and governance of higher education is more important than that which insures public control of public institutions while at the same time protecting the essential functions of higher education. In this respect it should be pointed out that California's 96 Community Colleges are operating under a plan regarded as universally good for the state as well as for local communities. The present system of governance of local boards that insures the public's control of Community Colleges, and of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to protect the state's interests, is a demonstrable and workable system of governance.

The essential functions of the Community Colleges, that of academic and transfer education, occupational education and general education, counseling and guidance, continuing education, and community services are protected by the cooperative working arrangement of students, faculty, administrators and trustees in concert with the Board of Governors. The effective delineation of functions between the campuses and the Board of Governors insures that Community Colleges are responsive to community needs while, at the same time, assuring that statewide responsibilities are also carried out.

The present method of governance of California's public higher education, including the Coordinating Council for Higher Education, has worked well for

coordination of the three segments of public higher education -- the University of California, the California State University and Colleges, and the California Community Colleges. This method of coordination has brought together regularly representatives of the segments with representatives of the general public and the independent segment of higher education.

If the independent institutions of higher education in California are indeed to remain independent, then these institutions should remain as free as possible from state control. Their voluntary cooperation with state policies and standards is to be applauded, but overt requirements on the part of the state could well diminish and perhaps destroy the independence, innovativeness, creativeness and diversity of these institutions -- as well as healthy competition that they offer to the state. In order for students in independent colleges and universities to receive state scholarships, these institutions must be fully accredited -- a practice that provides ample protection of the state's interests.

The independent institutions of higher education should continue to participate in statewide coordination. Private colleges and universities have much to offer the state and public higher education in the way of advice and recommendations dealing with the entire spectrum of issues in higher education.

As derived from ultimate power of the people of California and the State Constitution, the legislative and executive branches should determine the system of governance of higher education in the state. It is appropriate that the delineation of functions between state government and public higher education be that the state provides the funds for operating the segments of public higher education and appoints the members of their governing boards.

By and large, members of governing boards should have the responsibility to determine policy and direction of the three segments of public higher education in California. The Coordinating Council for Higher Education should remain an advisory body to provide a forum for discussion and determination of outstanding and timely issues and to advise the legislative and executive branches and the governing boards. To the extent that the Coordinating Council deals with the major and basic issues of our time and comes to decisions resolutely, independently and courageously -- backed up by sound and professional data and reports -- the Council's advice may be more and more heeded by the Legislature and the Governor and become a strong voice in resolving problems affecting higher education in the state.

System-wide administrators should be leaders who introduce major issues to their boards and suggest appropriate solutions -- and then carry out board policies. These administrators should deal with state-level issues and policies, protect the interests of the state and act in a coordinative rather than completely directive capacity.

Campus-level administrators should be invested with wide latitude to manage their campuses without undue interference from state-level administrators. Campus-level administrators should consult widely within their institutions and among their communities, but ultimately these administrators must be held accountable for their decisions.

Faculty should participate in campus decisions affecting curriculum and personnel. Faculty should be consulted in such decisions but participate in advisory rather than decision-making capacities.

Students should be encouraged to participate in developing academic programs. In addition, local and statewide governing boards would do well

to consult with student representatives. A student representative sits regularly with the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges and provides valuable input in deliberations of the Board. Most local Community College district boards also have student representatives, a practice which has proved to be most productive.

Members of the community should play an active role in governance. Overall advisory committees from the community should be used for each institution, and citizens advisory committees should also be used in connection with specific academic programs, such as business administration and technical fields. In the Community Colleges it is the community that controls each of these institutions by electing members from the community to serve on boards of trustees that determine policy for each Community College.

The rationale for student participation in governance is that the student often brings new and bold ideas into focus. Furthermore, the student as the major element in the educational process -- the reason for the very existence of colleges and universities -- should be consulted in appropriate ways as to the curriculum that is offered. This rationale exists irrespective of the amount of money a student pays for his education.

State-level and campus-level administrators must assume responsibility for the quality and efficiency of higher education. This policy should be enunciated clearly by state and local boards. Methods of accountability should be employed at all levels: faculty accountable for results of the learning process, local boards accountable to their communities, and state-level boards accountable to the legislative and executive branches. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the administrator to use whatever means of accountability are available.

A combination of local boards, statewide boards and a coordinating board provides an effective system of governance for California's tripartite system of public higher education. Greater centralization or a superboard would not serve California well, nor would a more complicated sub-superstructure of regional boards serve a useful purpose.

An examination of governance in California shows that the decentralized system of governance in the Community Colleges has worked well -- from any standpoint, including protection of the state's interests, local responsiveness to communities, effective operations in the districts, built-in accountability of local boards, healthy diversity, as well as pruning back of unnecessary programs.

Instead of more centralization, the states could use more decentralization of governance without giving up responsible statewide responsibility and coordination. Regional boards could be too far removed from the local scene to be responsive to communities and too far removed from the state level to protect those interests.

Segmental boards and institutional boards are both desirable. Segmental boards should maintain state standards in such areas as personnel and capital outlay and approve new academic programs to prevent unnecessary duplication among campuses. Institutional boards should maintain control and management over their campuses in such areas as employing and evaluating personnel, implementing capital outlay plans, and establishing classes within statewide-approved educational programs.

Segments and institutions should have sufficient independence to be responsible and accountable, particularly in areas of personnel and educational programs. Disadvantages of including segments in the Constitution is that such provision could prevent the Legislature from taking appropriate action

as necessary in operation and management of education in the state. On the other hand, whatever arguments are used for constitutional status for the University of California -- protection from the shifting winds of opinion, for example, should also be adequate reason for constitutional status for the California State University and Colleges and the California Community Colleges. However, the major reason for inclusion in the State Constitution of the Community Colleges would be to protect the present system of local management of Community Colleges. There do not seem to be the same reasons to include the Coordinating Council in the Constitution, since the Council is a state agency without direct or indirect institutional responsibility.

The role of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges should remain that of assuring that the state's interests are protected, with appropriate institutional control remaining at the local board level. At the present time the Board of Governors is responsible for statewide administration of Extended Opportunity Programs and Services in Community Colleges, formation of new districts and bringing all nondistrict territory into Community College districts, reorganization of existing districts, approval of plans for districting, interdistrict and regional development of programs and facilities, out-of-district classes, and approval of academic master plans and master plans for facilities.

The Board of Governors also sets minimum state standards for graduation requirements, probation, dismissal and admission policies, approves criteria and standards for graded and ungraded classes and for apportionments for classes for adults, and establishes state standards for employment of academic and administrative staff in the form of credentials. The Board has responsibility for statewide research, information services, collection and analysis of data,

articulation with other segments of education, and representation of the Community Colleges before legislative and executive agencies. The Board administers the state operational and capital outlay programs, establishes the uniform system of budgeting and accounting for Community College districts, and establishes tuition for out-of-state students. The Board also has responsibility for establishing procedures for interdistrict attendance agreements and space and utilization standards..

Local Community College boards of trustees are responsible for overall management of their campuses, orderly growth within Community College districts, development of academic and capital outlay master plans and for the total educational program and establishment of individual courses. Local boards have autonomous control over community service programs, procedures for instructional materials, determination of college calendars and holidays, setting district tax rates, calling of local elections, management and control of district property, and employment, evaluation and assignment of personnel.

Despite the concern of some, when the Board of Governors was formed, that a system of local management with local boards and statewide responsibility with a Board of Governors would be difficult to work, the system not only works, but it works well and is a model of delineation of functions and state and local relationships. The Community Colleges do not need greater centralization, and the Board of Governors, while never shying from Community College matters for which the Board has a statewide responsibility, recognizes and protects the great strength of the Community Colleges -- their closeness and responsiveness to the people of California. Local districts should retain at least the same amount of autonomy they have now. The people who run local Community Colleges are the people of their communities. The great strength of Community Colleges

lies in the local autonomy and in this direct responsiveness to the people.

Articulation arrangements will be adequate and equitable as long as the Legislature continues to stand firm in its belief that Community Colleges are a full partner in the tripartite system of public higher education in California and that Community College students are not second-class citizens.

Despite the fact that the Board of Governors and local boards are heavily committed to occupational education in counseling, guidance, screening, and curriculum, and despite the fact that enrollments in occupational education in Community Colleges are growing at a much faster rate than other Community College enrollments, the transfer function is a major responsibility of these two-year institutions. Indeed, thousands of students regularly go to Community Colleges who are also eligible to attend four-year institutions. Aside from reasons that students eligible to go to four-year institutions go instead to Community Colleges, the fact is that they appear to be saving the state and themselves a significant amount of money by doing so. If high school counselors and high school graduates begin to feel that Community College students have difficulty transferring to four-year institutions, there could be a dramatic increase of students entering as first-time freshmen at University and State College campuses.

There is ample evidence that Community College transfer students do as well as native students in the four-year institutions. There is no reason why all articulation agreements should not be met. Every appropriate credit and every transfer student should be accepted without difficulty in the four-year institutions.

It is important to insure that fair and equitable procedures are used to protect the integrity of the Community Colleges and of Community College transfer

students. There must be no artificial barriers to these transfers and no tyranny of one faculty over another.

The present system of governance of the California Community Colleges provides a context in which appropriate public pressures may be felt. Local trustees feel directly the wishes of the general public through tax, bond and board elections. The wishes of the legislative and executive branches are felt through appointments to the Board of Governors -- requiring also two-thirds consent of the Senate -- and through appropriations and legislative measures affecting the Community Colleges and the Board of Governors.

These are appropriate kinds of "political pressures": community impact at the local level, the general public represented at the statewide board level, and the will of the citizens represented by the actions of their legislative and executive representatives in Sacramento.

The processes and mechanisms for college governance should be established at the campus level, with appropriate review at the system level, and corrective measures, where necessary, at the legislative level. Local boards and chief executive officers of each campus should be given responsibility -- and strict accountability -- for governance of their campuses. Without such authority it is difficult to see how campuses could react wisely and effectively in the face of sudden and unexpected events. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the statewide board to insure that due process is observed on each campus and that faculty, students and other members of the campus community are consulted and have some appropriate advisement role in the decision-making process. If any of these responsibilities at the campus or systemwide level are not carried out appropriately, or if there are barriers which prevent the effective discharge of these responsibilities, the Legislature

should step in to provide any measures needed to assist campus authorities or to protect individual rights, as the case may be.

Greater campus responsiveness to societal and individual needs will occur as a result of greater interaction between community and campus. The greater involvement of citizens in the affairs of the campus, the greater recognition there will be on the part of higher education to turn its attention to current problems of society and the individual. Perhaps no segment of higher education anywhere has given more time, effort and attention to community services in the form of community lectures, concerts, forums and exhibits than the California Community Colleges. Always alert to the needs of the individual, the Community College has been able to serve individuals in their own community. And this is a tribute to the present system of governance of Community Colleges and an illustration of why great consideration should be given to preserving it.

More efficient institutional management of resources is critical. And the form of institutional governance most likely to produce these results is a local board for the institution that is elected by and reports directly to the citizenry, as well as a delegation of authority to the board's chief executive officer, accompanied by explicit and direct accountability for his success or failure in getting the most out of limited resources.

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